

Spielman teaches a notification architecture utilizing multiple processes configured for managing notification operations based on reception of SMTP-based messages within IMAP based message stores. The notification architecture includes a notification process, configured for receiving notification messages for respective subscribers from messaging sources according to a prescribed open protocol such as Internet Protocol (Abstract).

It is stated in the Office Action that Spielman discloses a system for providing voice mail service in an environment having multiple voice mail technology platforms, including a platform selector element (Fig. 1, item 12, col. 9, ll. 28-32) for receiving information regarding a call placed to a subscriber (col. 9, ll. 7-10, 14-15), obtaining voice mail technology platform indicator information from a subscriber profile database (preferences MWI, PAGER, col. 9, ll. 21-24), and selecting a voice mail technology platform by using the voice mail technology platform indicator information for the subscriber (col. 9, ll. 28-36, select secondary mailbox).

However, it is respectfully submitted that Spielman does not teach the platform selector element of claim 1, and, therefore, does not anticipate the invention of claim 1. More specifically, in the Spielman reference, item 12 of Fig. 1, which is described at col. 9, lines 5-41 and is being read by the Examiner as the claimed platform selector element, is a "notification process" which receives a notification message 18, parses notification preferences for the intended recipient, and determines a preferred notification device, generates a notification delivery message 28 for the intended recipient, and delivers the notification delivery message 28 to a secondary mailbox associated with the preferred notification device. Thus, in brief, the notification process of Spielman receives a notification message and selects a secondary mailbox associated with a preferred notification device.

It is respectfully submitted that Spielman does not teach or suggest that the "notification message" is information regarding a call placed to a subscriber for selection of a voice mail technology platform. In fact, Spielman only addresses notification of an intended recipient after a message has already been left in a message store or external notification source (Fig. 1, items 20a, 20b; col. 5, ll. 45-63). Logically then, selection of the secondary mailbox associated with the preferred notification device is not the

selection of a voice mail technology platform. The “secondary mailbox associated with the preferred notification device” cannot be characterized as a voice mail technology platform, as viewed by a person of ordinary skill in the field of the invention, since the notification device described by Spielman is for notification of an intended recipient that a message is already present, whereas a voice mail technology platform is for receiving a call from a caller to allow the caller to create a new message for the intended recipient. More specifically, referring to the language of claim 1, Spielman does not teach a platform selector for receiving information regarding a call placed to a subscriber, obtaining voice mail technology platform indicator information for the subscriber from a subscriber profile database, and selecting a voice mail technology platform by using the voice mail technology platform indicator information.

Considering the other independent claims, claim 8 concerns a method for providing voice mail service in an environment having multiple voice mail technology platforms. The method includes the steps of: receiving information regarding a call from a caller to be directed to a voice mail technology platform, the call information including an identity of the subscriber to whom the call was placed; obtaining voice mail technology platform indicator information for the subscriber from a subscriber profile database, and selecting a voice mail technology platform by using the voice mail technology platform indicator information. Claim 16 concerns a system, including a means for performing the steps of the method of claim 8. Claim 19 concerns a computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the steps of the method of claim 8.

For the reasons explained above with respect to claim 1, Spielman does not teach a method including the steps of: receiving information regarding a call from a caller to be directed to a voice mail technology platform, obtaining voice mail technology platform indicator information for the subscriber from a subscriber profile database, and selecting a voice mail technology platform by using the voice mail technology platform indicator information.

Thus, it is respectfully suggested that the rejection of claims 1, 8, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) can be properly withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 2-7, 9-15, 17-18 and 20-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spielman, or Spielman in view of Wheeler, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,572,583)(“Wheeler”), Jones et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,193,110)(“Jones I”), or Jones et al. (U.S. Patent 5,029,199)(“Jones II”). These rejections are also respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Wheeler, Jones I, nor Jones II in conjunction with Spielman suggest a system or method for providing voice mail service in an environment having multiple voice mail technology platforms as claimed in independent claims 1, 8, 16 and 19. Accordingly, it is respectfully suggested that the rejection of dependent claims 2-7, 9-15, 17-18 and 20-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) can also be properly withdrawn, at least for this reason.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that each of the dependent claims are separately distinguishable from the references cited and thus are separately patentable on their own. For instance, claims 4-7, 12-15, 17-18 and 20-21 all generally recite a system or method for providing voice mail service in an environment having multiple voice mail technology platforms where a personal greeting is played to the caller and a voice mail message from the caller is recorded as a part of the system or method. The recorded message can then be delivered to the selected voice mail technology platform. One advantage of the greeting player and message recorder functions recited in claims 4-7, 12-15, 17-18 and 20-21 is that they eliminate the need for each voice mail technology platform to have its own separate greeting player and message recorder functions. It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not suggest a system or method for providing voice mail service in an environment having multiple voice mail technology platforms, wherein the system or method has a voice mail technology platform selection function in conjunction with such “front-end” greeting player and message recorder functions.

In conclusion, it is respectfully urged that the instant application is in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes that there are unresolved issues, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the Applicant's attorneys-of-record to discuss the issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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